United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1433
13 July 1993

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Thorvald Stoltenberg tells Security Council that three parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina want settlement talks and have proposals to discuss; asks for support for humanitarian operations and reinforcement of UNPROFOR in safe areas.

+ Secretary-General reports that United Nations may soon be unable to meet day-to-day obligations because of precarious financial situation; unpaid assessments total $2.236 billion as of 31 May.

+ Secretary-General expresses condolences to families of four journalists killed in Mogadishu; instructs UNOSOM II to apprehend perpetrators and to exercise vigilance.

+ Haitian political dialogue to begin at Headquarters tomorrow as follow-up to 3 July Agreement between President Aristide and Lieutenant-General Cedras; will seek political truce for peaceful transition of power.

+ Draft agreement on military questions, including possibility of cease-fire, reached at Geneva negotiations to end Liberian civil war; plenary takes up political issues, including repatriation of refugees and humanitarian affairs.

+ Portugal, Russian Federation and United States, in letter to Secretary-General, call for end to fighting in Angola and urge UNITA to accept peace based on 1991 Bicesse Accords and Security Council resolutions.

* * *

The three parties to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina favour talks for a durable settlement and have come up with proposals for discussion, Thorvald Stoltenberg, Co-Chairman of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, said today at informal Security Council consultations. He

(more)

For information media--not an official record

warned that without talks, "the fighting would continue and the facts would be created on the ground". He later told correspondents that the three parties might meet next week in Geneva.

Mr. Stoltenberg said a prolonged war would mean great suffering for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The present situation could not last much longer; winter was approaching and humanitarian needs could not be met. The United Nations lacked resources, fighting made it difficult to plan humanitarian operations, and those operations were being deliberately obstructed on all sides. "Human suffering seems to be used as a tool in the war", he remarked.

The continuation of the war would promote hatred and reduce the chances of a negotiated peace in the future, Mr. Stoltenberg told the Council. That did not mean that there should be peace at any price, but that it was time for negotiations to begin. Meanwhile, Council members should support the appeal to be launched by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on 16 July for additional resources. Furthermore, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) should be reinforced in the safe areas established by resolution 824 (1993) to help stabilize the situation on the ground, he said.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has warned that the financial situation of the United Nations is becoming more and more precarious, and that it is highly probable that the Organization will not be able to meet its day-to-day obligations in the coming months. In an addendum to his financial report of 24 June, he pointed out that unpaid regular budget and peace-keeping assessments totaled $2.236 billion as of 31 May. Almost two thirds of that amount was owed by permanent members of the Security Council. Ten Member States had paid their peace-keeping assessments in full, and only 8 of those had also paid their regular budget assessments in full.

The Secretary-General said that overall unpaid contributions to the regular budget were likely to be higher at the end of the year than they had been at the beginning as certain Member States had indicated that they would have difficulty in meeting their obligations this year. The regular budget would need short-term assistance from other funds several times this year, but those funds would be less able to provide assistance than before. The cash-flow situation regarding peace-keeping operations was one of the most serious problems confronting the United Nations, and the General Assembly had responded by approving budgets for shorter periods and assessing Member States more often, he went on to say.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today instructed the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) to apprehend the killers of four journalists in Mogadishu, and to exercise vigilance in carrying out its tasks,

(more)

according to a United Nations spokesman. The Secretary-General expressed his condolences to the families of the four, saying that as a former journalist he had great sympathy for their plight.

The journalists were killed yesterday while approaching a United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA) command-and-control centre which had been attacked by UNOSOM II forces earlier in the day. They had been escorted to the area -- against UNOSOM II advice -- by USC/SNA militia men, and had been surrounded by a mob from the same faction.

* * *

Representatives of the parties in the Haitian Parliament will begin a political dialogue at Headquarters tomorrow following the Agreement concluded on 3 July by President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and Lieutenant-General Raoul Cedras, Commander-in-Chief of the Haitian Armed Forces. Representatives of the Presidential Commission will also participate in the dialogue, according to a spokesman for Dante Caputo, the Special Envoy for Haiti of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS).

The aims of the dialogue will include: a political truce and a social pact for a peaceful transition of power in Haiti; an agreement on procedures enabling the Haitian Parliament to resume its normal functioning and to confirm the Prime Minister as soon as possible; and an agreement permitting the adoption of laws necessary for the transition.

* * *

A draft agreement on military questions has been reached at the Geneva negotiations to end the civil war in Liberia, a United Nations spokesman said today. The week-long negotiations, which began on Saturday, are aimed at creating an atmosphere of trust for implementation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Peace Plan and the 1992 Yamoussoukro IV Accord, which called for a cease-fire, disarmament and democratic elections.

The draft, which dealt with the possibility of a cease-fire, was agreed on by working groups representing the Interim Government of National Unity of Liberia; the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL); the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL); and the United Liberation Movement for Democracy of Liberia (ULIMO). It was transmitted yesterday evening to the plenary, which then took up political issues, including the repatriation of refugees and humanitarian affairs.

The Co-Chairmen of the negotiations, Trevor Gordon-Somers, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Liberia; Canaan Banana, Eminent Person of the Organization of African Unity (OAU); and Abass Bundu, Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, were meeting with the parties individually with a view to building bridges when necessary, according to the spokesman.

(more)

* * *

Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States have called for an immediate end to the fighting in Angola and urged the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to return to the peace settlement based on the 1991 Bicesse Accords and relevant Security Council resolutions. In a letter to the Secretary-General dated 10 July, the three countries said the Angolan Government had a legitimate right to self-defence, given UNITA'S continued military attacks, but stressed the need for restraint because of increasing human suffering and destruction in the country.

Representatives of the three countries -- official observers for the implementation of the Bicesse Accords -- had met in Moscow on 8 July to discuss measures to resolve the Angolan crisis in the light of forthcoming Security Council meetings, according to the letter. They had discussed an arms embargo aimed at UNITA, measures to obtain UNITA's compliance with the Accords and with Council resolution 804 (1993) on the release of foreign hostages, and means to ensure the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid. They had also discussed the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II), and the possibility of bringing the Mission back to full strength. The letter went on to say that the need for those or other measures would depend on the actions of UNITA's leadership.

* *** *